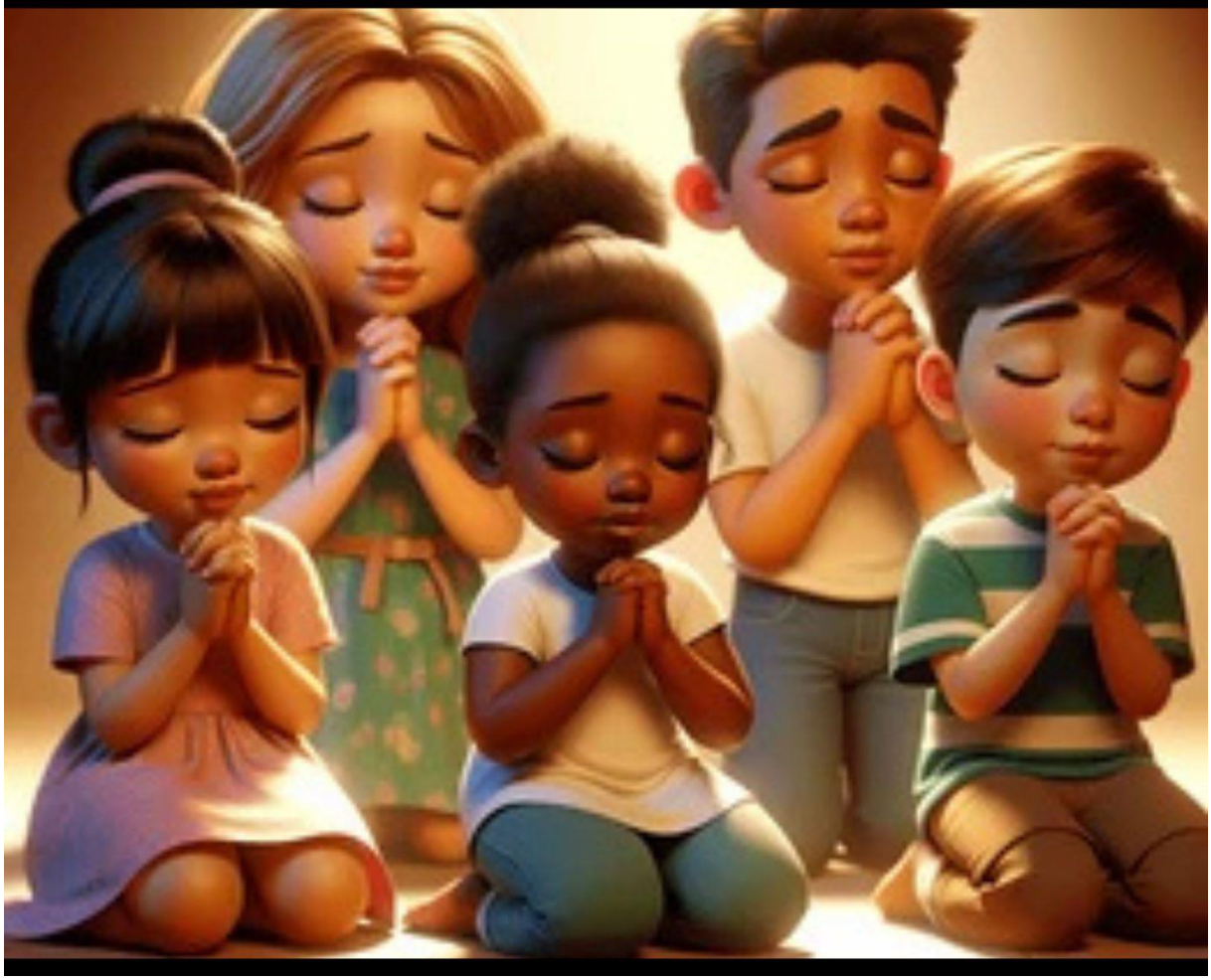
Our Father

For Children and Adults

Francisco C. Xavier

Meimei



OUR FATHER

IN THE BOOK OF MEIMEI

Meimei is not only a valiant missionary of goodness and light in our circle of influence, but also a devoted mentor to children, who reveals herself in the spiritual world by shaping children's minds with the clarity of the Redeeming Gospel.

Putting sensitivity at the service of intelligence, in her beautiful ideal of service, she took the Lord's Prayer and, with it, composed the delicate poem of commentaries and stories, legends and observations that we will read, recalling the unforgettable lessons of our Divine Master.

In difficult situations, she found in the Lord's Prayer a lesson and a solution. She also drew from it a note and a blessing. She offers these to the children in such pages. They are luminous fragments of her heart, shared in the form of letters.

May God multiply her energy to plant goodness. May the rays of love from her spiritual motherhood shine brighter everywhere for the little ones.

These are our wishes.

Emmanuel

Pedro Leopoldo, June 12, 1952

PART ONE
OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN

1

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN

When Jesus began the Sunday prayer, fulfilling the request of His companions who wished to learn how to pray, He began the supplication by saying:

"Our Father, who art in heaven..."

The Master wanted to tell us that God, above all, is our Father. Creator of men, stars, and flowers.

Lord of heaven and Earth.

To Him, we are all blessed children.

With this statement, Jesus also explained to us that we are one family in the world and thus, we are all brothers and sisters, with a duty to help one another.

He demonstrated true brotherhood by helping all people, both happy and unhappy, the needy and the sick, showing us the true path to perfection and peace. Through His actions, He provided a clear demonstration of compassion and integrity. As followers, we are called to model our actions after His examples.

If we feel God as our Father, we will recognize our brothers and sisters everywhere and become more willing to help others, knowing that support is mutual and will be returned in time.

Life will only be truly beautiful and glorious on Earth when we can accept the whole of Humanity as our great family.

2
EXISTENCE OF GOD

It is said that an illiterate old Arab prayed with such fervor and affection every night that one day the wealthy leader of a large caravan called him into his presence and asked: -Why do you pray with such faith? How do you know that God exists when you can't even read?"

The faithful man replied:
-Great lord, I know the existence of Our Heavenly Father by His signs.
-How so?" Asked the leader, amazed.

The humble servant explained:
-When you receive a letter from someone who is absent, how do you recognize who wrote it?
-By the handwriting.
-When you receive a piece of jewelry, how do you find out who made it?
-By the goldsmith's mark.

The employee smiled and added:
-When you hear animal footsteps around the tent, how do you know, then, whether it was a sheep, a horse, or an ox?"
-By the tracks. The boss replied, surprised.

Then the old believer invited him out of the tent and, showing him the sky, where the moon shone, surrounded by multitudes of stars, exclaimed respectfully:
"Lord, those signs up there cannot be from men!"

At that moment, the proud boss, with his eyes filled with tears, knelt on the sand and began to pray as well.

3

OUR FATHER

When we awaken to reason, we discover the living traces of God's Kindness everywhere. We find His immense love for us in the sun that warms us. The sun gives sustenance and joy to all. His affection is in the clouds that make rain for the contentment of Nature as well.

It is found in the waters of rivers and springs, which flow for the benefit of cities, fields, and flocks. We see it in the bread that nourishes us and the sweetness of the refreshing wind.

His goodness appears in the trees that extend their generous branches to us, like arms rich in blessings. We notice it in the flower that spreads its perfume in the atmosphere.

In the tenderness and security of our home, and in the assistance of our parents, siblings, and friends, who help us overcome the challenges of the world and life. His quiet providence ensures our health and spiritual well-being.

Many men of science seek to define God for us. Nonetheless, when we observe the protection of the Almighty on our paths and work on Earth every time, we must recognize that the most beautiful name we can give to Him is precisely the one Jesus taught us in His divine prayer: "Our Father".

4
REFLECTIONS

God is our Father.

- We are brothers and sisters to one another.

- Jesus is the Divine Master sent to us by God.

- Prayer is the immediate means of our communion with our Heavenly Father.

- Our best thoughts come from inspiration from Above.

- God's presence can be easily observed in the permanent kindness and the silent intelligence of Nature.

- We must love each other.

- The divine voice can be recognized in good advice.

- Whenever we help, we will be helped.

*

In our tender Mommy
Full of holy affection,
We feel God speaking to us
Deep in our hearts.

PART TWO
HALLOWED BE THY NAME

5

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Jesus' ministry was a constant sanctification of God's name.

That is why the Master did not limit Himself to saying "Hallowed be thy name" in the Lord's Prayer.

He sought to praise the Heavenly Father Himself, spreading joy and peace to all.

If He had wanted to, He could have remained isolated, somewhere of His choosing, to live in sublime thoughts, glorifying the Almighty with meditations and prayers.

Yet, the Divine Benefactor knew that the highest way to sanctify Eternal Goodness is to assist others, so that others may also understand that Our Father in Heaven desires our elevation and happiness.

Thus understanding, Jesus supported the elderly and children, the needy and the sick, the weak and the suffering, always loving and helping them.

By sanctifying His relationship with God, He spread hope and charity on Earth, enriching men with brotherhood and joy. Everything we have, see, receive, and feel belongs to God, Our Father, who magnifies and perfects everything for our benefit.

For this reason, we must remember that we will sanctify the Father's name whenever we do our best.

6

GLORIFYING THE HOLY NAME

The professor explained in class that, at the beginning of life on Earth, when minerals, plants, and animals learned that it was necessary to sanctify God's name, there was a great movement of attention on the part of almost everyone.

Certain stones began to produce diamonds, and others revealed gold and precious gems.

The noblest trees began to bear fruit.

The cotton plant began producing fibers used for clothing.

The rose bush began to bloom.

Grass spread across the ground, enhancing the landscape.
the Earth.

The cow began to provide milk.

The hen began to lay eggs, which were well received.

The sheep began to produce wool, and the bees started making honey.

And even the silkworm, which seems so ugly, to sanctify the name of God, produced beautiful threads, with which we have one of the most valuable fabrics the world knows.

At this point in the lesson, as the instructor paused, Pedrinho asked:
–Teacher, what do men do for that?

The school counselor thought for a moment and replied:
–Not all men learn life's lessons quickly, but those who want the truth know our minds should honor Eternal Wisdom, grow in goodness, and stay away from evil. People who work on developing brotherhood, understanding others, and helping everyone are souls awakened to the light, who truly praise our Heavenly Father.

And, in conclusion, he stated:
–The Lord desires happiness for all, and therefore all those who collaborate for the well-being of others are those who sanctify His Divine Goodness on Earth.

7
SONGS OF PRAISE

When life began on Earth, birds suffered greatly. They perched in trees and knew how to fly, but how could they raise their young? It was very difficult.

Forced to leave their eggs on the ground, they were almost always persecuted and humiliated. The rain cooled them, and large animals trampled and broke them without compassion.

And what about the snakes? They slithered on the ground, looking for devouring them, in the presence of their own parents, who were terrified and trembling.

It is said that, because of this, the birds gathered together and begged the Heavenly Father to give them the necessary assistance. God heard them and sent them an angel who began to guide them in building their nest.

The birds had no hands, but the messenger encouraged them to use their beaks and, showing them the tree branches, taught them to carry crumbs from the forest and use them to build nests high up.

The chicks began to grow without trouble, and when storms came, they were all safe. Recognizing that the Heavenly Father had answered their prayers, the birds agreed among themselves to sing every day in praise of the Holy Name of God.

For this reason, there are birds that make themselves heard in the morning, others during the day, and still others at night.

When we hear a bird singing, let us remember that from its little heart, covered in feathers, comes the eternal gratitude that God is hearing in the heavens.

8
PRAISE GOD

Old Andrew was a resigned and suffering slave. One day, he learned that Jesus had taught us to sanctify God's name and promised himself never to do evil.

If the farm foreman persecuted him, Andrew forgave him and said with all his heart:
-Praise be to God.

If a companion tempted him to shirk his daily duties, considering the injustices surrounding them, he said he was counting on Divine Goodness, pointed to heaven, and repeated:
-Praise be to God.

When the captives were freed, the farm owner called him and told him that poverty and illness were knocking at his door, and asked him not to abandon him. All his companions left, intoxicated with joy, but Andrew took pity on the lord, now humbled, and remained at his service, imagining that God would be pleased with his actions.

The landowner gradually lost everything he had, ruined by illness, but the generous servant cared for him until his death, always saying:
-Praise be to God.

Andrew was tired and old when his former master passed away. He wanted to work, but his body bent to the ground, in great pain. He then begged with humility and patience, and

each time he received some bread to satisfy his hunger or some rag to cover his body, he would joyfully exclaim:
-Praise be to God.

One night, very alone, thirsty, and feverish, he noticed someone entering his straw hut. Who could it be? In a few moments, an angel stood before him. Shy and distressed, he tried to say something, but could not. The angel, however, smiling, embraced him and exclaimed:
-Andrew, the name of Our Heavenly Father has been exalted by your heart, and I have come to seek you so that your voice may now praise Him in heaven.

The next day, the old slave's body was found dead in the hut, but birds were perched on the rustic roof, singing, and many people said that the birds seemed to repeat: "Praise be to God!"

9
REMINDERS

~The world we live in belongs to God.

~We must give thanks for the blessings of Our Heavenly Fa~ ther every day.

~ A heart that is grateful to the Lord spreads goodness and joy in His name.

~ Jesus thanked God by helping others.

~Nature glorifies Divine Goodness daily, in the light of the sun, in the gentle breeze, in the singing of birds, and in the scent of flowers.

~Those who help plants and animals show respect and affec~ tion for Our Heavenly Father's Creation.

~I must be good to everyone, because the Almighty has been infinitely good to me on all occasions.

~ Those who work with joy show gratitude to Heaven.

~By cooperating willingly with others, we will be serving the Father.

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In the birdsong,
In the fields, in the sea, in the flowers, Life repeats:
"Praise the Lord!"

PART THREE
THY KINGDOM COME

10
THY KINGDOM COME

"Thy kingdom come..." — This is what Jesus prayed to the Creator, knowing that only God's Plan can grant us true happiness. Yet, the Master did not limit Himself to praying; He worked and strove to lay the necessary foundations for the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

With His own hands, He spread the blessings of peace and joy so that men might become better. A locomotive cannot run without proper tracks. A car cannot move forward without a suitable road. The preparation of a well-made dish requires the use of all the necessary seasonings.

Likewise, heavenly help requires our effort. It is always essential to purify our feelings in order to receive and spread such assistance.

In the same way, without goodness within us, we cannot truly feel God's kindness or understand the benevolence of our neighbor.

When we experience darkness in our lives and say, "Let there be light," we must take practical steps, such as providing a candle to help bring light and clarity into our situation.

If we ask for Divine Grace, let us prepare our feelings to comprehend and manifest it, so that happiness and harmony may live with us.

Jesus worked for the coming of Heaven's Glory to the world, supporting everyone, even to the cross of sacrifice, making clear to us that The Kingdom of God is Love, and only through Love will it shine among men forever.

11
THE LESSON OF GENEROSITY

When Jesus entered Jerusalem victoriously, riding on a donkey, people came out in excitement to see and greet Him in the public square.
Many assumed that the Master would be a ruler like the others and shouted:
- Glory to the King of Israel!
- Down with the Romans!
- Hosanna to the victor!
- Long live the Son of David!... Long live the King of the Jews!

And they carpeted the street with flowers.
Roses and lilies, colorful palms, and aromatic leaves covered the ground where the Savior was to pass.

The Master, however, on the tired little animal, seemed sad and thoughtful. Perhaps He reflected that the noisy joy of the people was not the kind of happiness He desired.

He wanted to see the people content, but without hatred or rebellion, inspired by the good that helps preserve divine blessings.

The glorified One rode in silence when a beautiful young woman stood out from the crowd, approached Him, and handed Him an armful of roses, exclaiming:
-Lord, I offer you these flowers for the Kingdom of God.

Christ fixed His light-filled eyes on her and asked:
-Do you truly wish to serve the Kingdom of Heaven?

–Oh! Yes... The girl said happily.
–Then, the Master asked, help Me protect the donkey that serves Me by bringing it some grass and fresh water.

The young woman readily complied and began to understand that, in the building of the Divine Kingdom, Jesus expects from us, above all, sincere and faithful generosity in our hearts.

12
SOMETHING ELSE

A devout believer wanted to build the Kingdom of God. He asked the Lord to help him understand His divine purposes and went into the fields.

As he walked, he met the singing Wind. The Wind said:
–God sent me to sow seeds and sweep paths, but I also like to sing to lull the sick and little children to sleep.

Then the devotee noticed a Flower filling the air with perfume, and the Flower told him:
–My mission is to prepare the fruit; however, I also produce the aroma that perfumes even the most impure places.

Immediately afterward, the man stopped at the foot of a large Tree, which protected a well of water teeming with frogs, and the Tree spoke to him:
–The Lord entrusted me with the task of helping man; however, I believe I must also protect the springs, the birds, and the animals.

The visitor stared at the ugly frogs and made a gesture of disgust, but the Tree continued:
–These frogs are good friends. Today I can help them, but later they will help me defend my own roots against the worms of destruction and death.

The devotee understood the teaching and continued on, reaching a large pottery.

He caressed the clay on the table, and the clay said to him: -My job is to ensure firm ground, but I obey the potter and try to help in a man's home by shaping bricks, tiles, and pots.

Then the devotee returned home and understood that to serve in the building of the Kingdom of God, it is necessary to help others always more, and to accomplish, each day, something more than what is just right to do.

13
FAITH AND PERSEVERANCE

Three young men longed to find the Lord in order to pray to Him.

After many prayers, behold, one day, in the field where they worked, the Lord's chariot came to them, guided by angels.

Radiant with light, the Divine Friend descended from the chariot and listened to them. The three knelt in tears of joy, and the first begged Jesus for the favor of wealth. The kind Master ordered one of the angels to give him an enormous treasure in coins.

The second begged for perfect beauty, and the Heavenly Benefactor ordered one of the servants to give him a miraculous ointment so that beauty would shine on his face.

The third exclaimed with faith:
–Sir, I don't know how to choose... Give me what is fair, according to Your will. The Master smiled and instructed one of His angels to give him a large bag. Then He blessed them and left...

The young man who had received the bag opened it eagerly, but, oh, what a disappointment! It contained nothing but a huge stone.

His companions laughed at him, thinking he had been tricked, but the young man affirmed his faith in the Lord, took the stone with him, and began to chip away at it, searching, searching...

After some time, he reached the hardened core of the block and discovered a magnificent diamond, which brought him great fortune. He utilized these resources to construct a house that offered refuge and care for the sick, dedicating it to the Lord.

He lived happily, taking care of his work, when one day two sick people knocked on his door. He had no trouble recognizing them. They were his two former prayer companions, who had been deceived by gold and beauty, acquiring only illness and fatigue, misery and disappointment.

They embraced while sobbing with happiness, and then the Divine Master arose and said:
-Blessed are all those who know how to make use of the stones of life, because faith and perseverance in benevolence are the two great foundations of the Kingdom of God.

14
A MOTHER'S LETTER

My son, if you seek the blessing of happiness, do not forget that the Celestial Kingdom begins in our own hearts and that the first place we must work for it is in the very home we live in.

True joy does not always belong to those who dominate, but it never leaves generous souls who learn to spread goodness.

If you want tranquility to accompany you, seek to be useful.

Why do you run away from your father when, tired and dejected, he shows a worried expression?

Why do you turn away from your mother when you see the dew of tears in her eyes?

Draw near to them and make them feel that you have a comprehensive and loving heart.

A trickle of water transforms the desert into an oasis. A gesture of affection works miracles.

How many people hope to build the Kingdom of God, lighting bonfires of enthusiasm in the public square and forgetting in the cold of indifference those whom Heaven has entrusted to them!

Keep peace within yourself so that you may spread it to others. God placed our first school within the walls of our home.

If we cannot exercise tolerance and generosity toward five or ten people who await our understanding and help, we will teach the path to well-being to others in vain.

The first step to Paradise is called Gentleness. Learn to support others so that they may support you, and wherever you are, you will always be a valuable worker in the building of the Divine Kingdom.

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NOTE

All simple goodness,
Sincere, noble, loyal,
Cooperates in the construction
Of the Heavenly Kingdom.

PART FOUR
THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

15
THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

When building a solid and comfortable home, there is always an architect's plan to be followed. Workers must consult the marked lines to avoid going beyond their duties and committing improprieties that could harm the work.

The carpenter must not disturb the painter, and the painter must respect the glazier. Likewise, in services of spiritual elevation for humanity and the world, we must seek the Will of the Lord so that Divine Designs are properly executed.

We know that the welfare of all is the plan of Eternal Wisdom. So, if we value our status as workers educated to provide fair service, we must know how to do our part in the fulfillment of the divine plan, without disturbing our neighbor.

Let us be convinced that if each of us fulfills our obligation in the plan of the Highest Plane, offering each day the best we can, we will undoubtedly be fulfilling the will of Our Heavenly Father.

16
THE SERVICE OF PERFECTION

An old potter, very dedicated to his work, once fell seriously ill and began to experience enormous difficulties. As time passed, the relatives he had served most lived in distant regions and seemed to have forgotten him...

Left entirely on his own, he began to live on public charity, but while begging, he fell in the street and broke one of his legs, forcing him to stay in bed for a long time.

In his despair, crying bitterly, he prayed and begged God for some consolation for his suffering. Then he fell asleep and dreamed that an angel appeared to him, bringing the answer he had asked for.

The messenger from Heaven led him to the ancient kiln where he worked and, showing him some beautiful vases he had made, asked:
-How did you manage to create such perfect work?
The potter, proud of his work, replied:
-Using the fire with great care and affection, in the service of perfection. Some vases were returned to the intense heat two or three times.
-And without fire, would you have accomplished your task?
The emissary asked again.
- Never! - replied the old man, certain of what he was saying.
- Thus, the angel explained, suffering and struggle are the invisible flames that Our Heavenly Father created to beautify our souls, which one day will be sublime and perfect vessels for

the service of Heaven. At that moment, the patient woke up, understood the Divine Will and gave thanks to God.

17
THE SMALL ANNOYANCE

A well-mannered young man, incapable of offending those who sought his friendly help, always meditated on God's will and was ready to fulfill it.

Once, very concerned about the time, he approached a small bus, intending to use it to cross a long stretch of the city where he lived. But just as he was about to do so, a neighbor appeared in front of him, capturing his attention for a long conversation.

The young man checked his watch, second by second, revealing the haste that drove him to move quickly, but his friend, holding his arm, seemed intent on conveying every detail of an absolutely unimportant matter.

Annoyed by the tedious and pointless conversation, the young man listened to his companion out of politeness, only to find that the vehicle had left without him.

A few minutes later, however, disturbing news arrived. The car was being driven by a drunk driver and had plunged off a cliff, crashing to pieces. By patiently listening to an uncomfortable lecture, the young man had been saved from a sad disaster.

The young man reflected on the occurrence and came to the conclusion that, often, Divine Will manifests itself in our favor in the small setbacks along the way, helping us to fulfill our simplest duties.

He began to consider, with more respect and attention, the unexpected circumstances that arise before us in the sphere of our daily duties.

18
REFLECTIONS

We can discern God's Will in all situations:

In suffering, it is Patience.

In turmoil, it is Serenity.

In the face of evil, it is the Good that assists.

In the face of shadows, it is Light.

In work, it is devotion to Duty.

In bitterness, it is Hope.

In error, it is a Correction.

In a fall, it is Resurrection.

In struggle, it is Moral Valor.

In temptation, it is Resistance.

In the face of discord, it is Harmony.

In the face of hatred, it is Love.

In the noise of slander, it is Silence.

In offense, it is Complete Forgiveness.

In ordinary life, it is Love towards all.

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Those who help without ceasing,
Every hour, every day,
Are fulfilling the Will
Of the Eternal Wisdom.

PART FIVE
GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

19
GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Our daily bread is not only lunch, dinner, snacks, and coffee. It is also ideas and feelings, words and actions.

For health and happiness to reign around us, we need our meals, but we also need peace and hope, faith and moral courage.

Through our actions, we have influence on others.

When we talk, we share our thoughts.

Our actions influence those around us, according to our intentions.

Therefore, others also influence us with their attitudes.

If we enjoy depressing conversations and search for inferior reading material, we quickly find ourselves altered and disturbed, without even realizing it.

Our companions speak clearly about us.

Our readings reveal our innermost selves.

Let us then seek the spiritual sustenance that fosters inner harmony, strengthens our character, protects us from negativity, and encourages us to be examples of understanding and brotherhood.

In Jesus, we have the bread that came down from Heaven, and even today, the Master continues to feed the thoughts of Humanity through a Book—the Divine Gospel, in which He teaches us, through benevolence and love, the path to our eternal happiness.

20
THE NEED FOR EFFORT

It is said that, in the beginning of life on Earth, people's nourishment was found everywhere as an offering from Divine Providence.

In exchange for such kindness, the Heavenly Father asked them to strive harder to improve their life.

People, however, observing that everything came to them for free, began to despise service. The useless weeds grew so much that they invaded the houses, where everyone ate and slept.

No one wanted to learn to read. Rust, trash, and mold were everywhere.

Animals, as dogs, that assisted with surveillance, and birds, like vultures, that cleaned here and there, were more helpful than humans.

Seeing that no one wanted to reciprocate divine trust, the Heavenly Father ordered the removal of existing resources, determining that the inhabitants of Earth should strive to achieve their own sustenance.

Since that time, air and water, the sun and flowers, the light of the stars and the moonlight have remained free for the people, but the hard work of feeding themselves became a law for all.

By struggling to sustain themselves, humans improved the land, cleaned their homes, learned to be wise, and ensured

progress. God provides everything.

The soil, rain, heat, wind, fertilizer, and guidance are His gifts to the Earth we inhabit, which we must improve.

Nevertheless, the preparation of our daily bread, through our own sweat and diligence, is a common obligation for all of us, so we do not forget our divine duty to serve, incessantly, in pursuit of Perfection.

21
THE EXAMPLE OF THE TREE

The first tree to appear on Earth is said to have brought with it a directive from the Heavenly Father to feed and assist man in the name of Heaven by any necessary means.

Determined to fulfill the Lord's command, one day, it was visited by a thief, pursued by the law. He was hungry, so he stole several fruits from it. Then he cut down many branches, using them to make a soft bed to rest and recover.

The tree was not upset by the assault. It seemed happy to help him and even seemed interested in putting him to sleep, harmoniously shaking its leaves, stirred by the wind.

Standing up, strengthened, the poor man heard the noise of his accusers searching for him and, distressed, not knowing which way to go in the deserted meadow, he noticed that the noble plant, in silence, seemed to invite him to take refuge in its branches.

Immediately, like a child, the unfortunate man climbed the trunk and hid in the lush canopy.

The guards came and, giving up on finding him due to their fruitless search, retreated to a distant village. It was then that the unfortunate man descended to the ground, impressed and moved, realizing that he was standing before a humble messenger from Heaven.

He had stolen its fruits and mutilated its branches, however it

had also offered him safe shelter. The unhappy man began to meditate on the example of the venerable tree, tasked by God with cooperating in the distribution of daily food on Earth.

Recognizing it as a true emissary of Heaven, which had satisfied his hunger and given him maternal protection, he abandoned the evil in which he had immersed himself and became another man.

22
SPIRITUAL NURTURE

The teacher struggled with a big problem at school. The students began reading many stories about bad men, theft, and crime, and started to live in complete insubordination. They wanted to imitate adventurers and criminals, and for this, they behaved badly at school and at home.

Some used foul language, thinking they were well-educated, and others indulged in tasteless toys, believing that this showed their superiority and intelligence.

They forgot about good books.
They mocked good advice.

In view of this, one day the teacher gathered all the classes for their usual snack time and presented them with a strange surprise.

The plates were full of inappropriate things, such as bread covered in mud, sweets with rotten potatoes, pieces of apples with spoiled tomatoes, and jams mixed with bile and pepper.

The angry children shouted at what they saw, but the old teacher asked for silence and, taking the floor, said to them:
-My children, if we need pure food for the benefit of the body, we also need wholesome nourishment for our soul.

Bread guarantees our physical energy, but reading is the source of our spiritual life.

Bad books, unfortunate reports, slander, and criminal adventures represent rotten substances that we absorb, poisoning our mental life and harming our conduct.

If we enjoy the delicious meals that help preserve our health, let us also seek out the pages that help defend our inner harmony, so that we never stray from correct conduct.

With that lecture, snack time ended. The students left with their heads down.

And, little by little, the boys began to mend their ways, changing for the better.

23
NOTES

-There are two types of health: physical and mental. Both must go together.

-God grants us a thousand resources every day to nourish our spirit with the best emotions.

-We absorb each other's thoughts.

-Help Nature's useful production and you will be cooperating with Divine Providence.

-Give your neighbor the bread that is left on your table and the Lord will enrich you with good cheer and joy.

-In serving God, the Earth spends millions of lives every day in order to sustain us.

-Speaking ill of others, instead of helping them, is the same as wrapping our feelings in invisible mud, instead of making them shine.

-The fruits that delight you are the results of the efforts of those who came before you in this world.

-Prepare the seedbed now for those who will come in the future.

-Plant a friendly tree and you will help those who help you.

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Whoever spreads the words
Of love and consolation,
Spreads throughout the Earth
The gifts of the Divine Bread.

PART SIX
FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

24
FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

When we say the words "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we are not only expecting benefit for our hearts and consciences, but we are also committing ourselves to forgive those who offend us.

We all tend to overlook the major flaws in ourselves, while condemning, without examination, the minor faults of others.

That's why Jesus, when teaching us to pray, recommended that we forget any hurt someone may have caused us.

If we do not offer rest to our neighbor's mind, how can we hope to find rest for our own thoughts?

Is it right to keep all the bread in our house, letting hunger ravage our neighbor's home?

Peace is also food for the soul, and if we desire tranquility for ourselves, let us not forget the understanding and harmony we owe to others.

When we ask for the Heavenly Father's tolerance on our behalf, let us also remember to support others with our tolerance.

Let us always help.

If the Lord can bear with us and forgive us, constantly granting us new and blessed opportunities for correction, let us also

learn to spread understanding and love for the benefit of those around us.

25
FAIR FORGIVENESS

In a certain European city, a man, seen as a criminal, was sentenced to death by hanging. The judge had been harsh in his ruling.

He claimed that the unfortunate man was a great criminal and that only the ultimate penalty could resolve the situation.

A few days before the hanging, the magistrate came to the prison with his son. The latter was a cheerful and kind-hearted young man. He approached an old soldier and began to examine his firearm.

The boy did not realize the danger of the firearm he was handling. Suddenly, a shot escaped. To everyone's surprise, the bullet lodged in the arm of the condemned man, who was calmly watching from behind the bars.

Bathed in blood, he was helped by the judge and bystanders, and because the magistrate's words were harsh and cruel to his thoughtless son, the prisoner remembered the teachings of Jesus, knelt at the feet of the illustrious visitor. Tearfully, he begged him to forgive the young man.

He affirmed that the young man had not had the slightest intention of hurting him. The judge noted the profound sincerity of the plea and, in silence, began to recognize that the condemned man had a noble heart and inexpressible benevolence.

The very next day, he took steps to review the case against him, and before long, the death penalty was commuted to just a few months in prison.

By forgiving the boy who had hurt him, the prisoner found fair forgiveness for his faults, thus managing to start his life over on a more solid foundation of peace, trust, work, and joy.

26
THE EFFECT OF ANGER

An old Jewish man, with his soul tortured by heavy remorse, came one day to Jesus and confessed strange sins to him.

Using the authority he had held in the past, he had stripped several friends of their lands and possessions, throwing them into total ruin and reducing their families to painful captivity.

With premeditated wickedness, he had sown despair, affliction, and death in many hearts.

He found himself sick, distressed, and troubled... Doctors could not solve his problems, whose roots were lost in the deep labyrinths of his torn consciousness.

The Divine Master, however, right there in Simon Peter's house, where He was, prayed for the sick man and then said to him: "Go in peace and sin no more."

The old man noticed that a wave of new life had penetrated his body, felt healed, and left, giving thanks to God.

He seemed perfectly happy when, crossing the long line of sufferers waiting for Christ, a poor beggar accidentally stepped on one of the calluses on his feet. The restored sick man let out a terrible scream and attacked the beggar with his cane.

A great commotion ensued. Jesus came out into the street to calm everyone down. Contemplating the bloodied victim, He

approached the offender and said: – After receiving forgiveness, in the name of God, for so many faults, could you not excuse the slight rashness of a companion more unfortunate than yourself?

The old Jew, now very pale, put his hands on his chest and cried out to Christ:
– Master, help me!... I feel myself fainting again... What could this be?

But Jesus only replied, very sadly:
–That, my brother, is the hatred and anger that you have once again called upon your own heart.

And even today, this happens to many who, for lack of patience and love, acquire bitterness, disturbance, and illness.

27
MOMMY

When Heavenly Father needed to place the first little children on Earth, He came to the conclusion that He should call someone who knew how to forgive infinitely.

Someone:

~Who did not see evil.

~Who wanted to help without demanding payment.

~Who was willing to keep the children close to their heart with patience and tenderness.

~Who had enough serenity to repeat the little lessons of each day over and over again.

~Who could watch over them night after night without complaint.

~Who hummed softly to put babies who still cannot talk to sleep.

~Who stayed at home, out of love, caring for children who cannot yet go out on the street.

~Who told many stories about life and the world.

~Who hugged and kissed sick children.

–Who taught them to take their first steps, keeping them upright.

–Who took them to school so they could learn to read.

They say that our Father in Heaven spent a long time examining, examining... and then He called the Woman, gave her the title of Mother, and entrusted her with the children.

For this reason, our Mother is the representative of Divine Love in the world, teaching us the science of forgiveness and affection at every moment of our journey on Earth.

If we can imitate her in the examples of kindness and sacrifice that she constantly offers us, we will certainly be precious helpers of Our Father in life.

28
SILENCE

Silence can be a valuable response in challenging situations, for example when:

~We hear unkind words.

~Someone is irritated.

~Gossip seeks us out.

~Offense strikes us.

~Someone becomes angry.

~Criticism hurts us.

~We hear slander.

~Ignorance accuses us.

~Pride humiliates us.

~Vanity provokes us.

Silence often reflects patience and forgiveness, and awaits time.

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FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness, at any time,
Is always a ray of light,
Leading our lives
To communion with Jesus.

PART SEVEN
LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

29
LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

The Lord's infinite Love protects us from temptation, but we must also make an effort and work with His constant guidance.

There are laws organized for the benefit of all, but if we do not respect them, we cannot expect their shielding.

We know fire is destructive, so we must use it responsibly. We cannot beg for divine help for the recklessness that is repeated every day.

If someone appreciates laziness, they will not attract the blessings that help those who cultivate work. If a person throws thorns at others, how can he expect their smiles?

It is indisputable that Divine Providence will constantly assist us, freeing us from evil; however, it expects to find the values of goodwill in us.

We do not ignore that our Heavenly Father is always with us, but we are often the ones who stray from our Creator.

In order not to succumb to temptation, it is essential that we look for kindness and cultivate it ceaselessly.

There is no harvest without planting. Certainly, we must hope that God will grant us the "abundance" of His love, but let us not forget that we must give "something" of our own endeavor.

30
THE PROBLEM OF TEMPTATION

A teacher, in class, tried to explain to the boys that the motive for temptation resides within ourselves; however, as the students had great difficulty understanding, he took them to the school's large courtyard.

Once there, he had a beautiful ear of corn brought in and asked the boys:
-Which one of you would like to eat this ear of corn as it is?

The young people smiled mockingly, and one of them exclaimed:
-Come on! Who would dare to eat raw corn?

The teacher then had one of the horses used by the school brought before them, set up some obstacles in front of the animal, and placed the ear of corn on a small table for it to eat. The large horse nimbly jumped over the obstacles and eagerly advanced toward the morsel.

The benevolent and friendly teacher then explained to the surprised students:
-Temptation seeks us out according to the feelings we carry within ourselves.

When we give in to some unworthy fascination, it is because our will remains weak in the face of our lower desires. The forces that tempt us correspond to our impulses.

We cannot imagine or want what we do not know. For this reason, we need to watch over our brains and hearts in order to select the suggestions that visit our thoughts.

In closing, he stated:
~Good or bad situations outside of us are the same as the good or bad purposes we carry within us.

31
THE NECESSITY OF EDUCATION

In a time when easy transportation did not exist on Earth, a great king took a liking to a fiery, light-colored horse from his stable, but when he wanted to use it for palace services, he was informed by the head of the stables:
-Your Majesty, this animal is prone to many temptations. It only takes a slight movement to frighten it and cause disasters. A simple dry leaf on the road is a reason for countless kicks.

The king listened attentively and said he would remedy the situation.

The next day, he had it harnessed to a huge cleaning cart, where the horse found itself so confined that it could not make any movements other than those necessary.

After a few weeks, the monarch decided to put him to the hard work of donkeys, carrying very heavy loads.

At first, the animal rebelled, snorting and neighing loudly; however, it was so often visited by the cries and whips of the farmhands and carried so many loads that, after some time, it became a model of meekness and gentleness, placed in royal service, much to the sovereign's satisfaction.

This is what happens to us in life.

Destined to work according to God's Will, if we live given over to the temptations of evil, disobedience, and selfishness, the Lord determines that we be entrusted to struggle and trials, to

hardship and suffering, which, little by little, teach us humility and respect, diligence and gentleness.

After undergoing the various processes of education indispensable to our refinement, we will then be utilized, successfully and securely, in the general services of God's Kindness, alongside our brothers and sisters.

32
THE TEMPTATION OF REST

In a field, a large number of maggots wanted to destroy an old, hard-working wooden plow that was disrupting their plans.

Thus, one day, they gathered around it and began to say:
-Why don't you take care of yourself?
You're sick and tired...
After all, we all need some rest...
Free yourself from the terrible yoke of the farmer!
Poor machine!
To what torments you subject yourself!

The plow listened... listened... and ultimately believed.

It, who was so brave that did not even feel the slightest discomfort in the most difficult duties, began to complain about the cold rain, the heat of the sun, the roughness of the stones, and the dampness of the ground.

It cried and cried so much, begging for rest, that its former companion granted it a few days off in a cornfield's place.

When the worms saw it standing still, they approached *en masse*, attacking it mercilessly. Within a few days, they rotted it, riddling it with spots, wounds, and holes.

The plow groaned and sighed for the farmer's help, dreaming of a return to the joyful and enlightened tasks of the field...
But it was too late.

When the helpful friend returned to use it, it was simply a helpless piece of junk.

The story of the plow is a warning to us all.

The temptation to rest is one of the most dangerous, as, after ignorance, laziness is the dark source of all evil. Let us never forget that work is the divine gift that God has entrusted to us for the defense of our joy and the preservation of our own health.

33
THE BLESSING OF WORK

Through the blessing of work, we can forget disturbing thoughts and bitter matters, serve others and enrich ourselves; by working, we improve our home and enlarge the piece of land where Divine Providence has placed us.

By occupying our mind, heart, and arms with good deeds, we exemplify true fraternity and acquire the treasure of sympathy, with which we will earn the general respect and cooperation.

Those who do not know how to be useful do not correspond to the Goodness of Heaven, do not fulfill their just duties towards Humanity, nor do they repay the dignity of the loving homeland that serves as their Mother.

Work is an institution of God.

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PATH TO PERFECTION

Whoever moves their hands in service,
Escapes darkness and temptation.
Daily work
Is the path to perfection.

PART EIGHT
DELIVER US FROM EVIL, FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN.

34
DELIVER US FROM EVIL, FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN.

The Lord will deliver us from evil; however, we must desire not to err.

What about a man who asked for help against a fire by throwing gasoline on the flames?

The kingdom of life, with all its notes of greatness, belongs to God. All the power and glory of the Universe, all the resources and possibilities of existence belong to Divine Providence, but within our sphere of action, the will is ours.

If we do not align our desires with the Law of Good, which proceeds from Heaven, we cannot expect to achieve harmony or lasting contentment.

In the shadows of selfishness, we will be alone, afflicted, and disturbed, because it prioritizes our own happiness at the expense of others.

God has allowed free will to be our own heritage, so that we may acquire freedom and greatness, love and wisdom, by ourselves, as children of His infinite goodness.

Therefore, if we are slaves to our creations, which we sometimes spend a lot of time rectifying, we are always free to desire and imagine.

We know that any service or accomplishment begins in our feelings and thoughts. Let us thus learn to preserve our will in the light of righteous conscience, once, while praying to God to deliver us from evil, we must, in turn, seek the path of good-hearted people.

35
THE FOUNTAIN EXAMPLE

A student of wisdom, seeking to learn the best way to rid himself of evil, was led to a spring that flowed calmly and crystal clear. Following its course, he observed:
-Look at the example of the spring, which helps everyone without asking, and never stops until it reaches a great communion with the ocean. Near it, plants of all kinds grow, and animals of all shapes and sizes find their refreshment in its waters.

As they walked, a small boy threw two stones into the stream, and the waters swallowed them silently, continuing onward.

-Did you notice it?-Said the friendly mentor -The spring did not protest against the stones. It received them patiently and continued working.

Further ahead, they saw a thick sewage channel hurling debris into the white body of water, but the stream absorbed the dark mud without complaint and continued moving forward.

The teacher said:
-The fountain does not rebel against the mud thrown in its face. It collects it without complaint and transforms it into benefits for the land in need of fertilizer.

Further on, they noticed that while swallows bathed, nimble and graceful, ugly frogs also entered the stream and seemed happy in their joyful dives. The waters supported everyone

without the slightest complaint.

The kind mentor disciple concluded:
– Let us follow the example of the fountain and we will learn to free ourselves from any captivity.

In truth, only those who march forward, with the work that God entrusts to them, without hearing the suggestions of evil, win honorably in life, guaranteeing, in favor of all, the joys of Eternal Goodness.

36
THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK

The world was in great turmoil. People were engaged in constant conflict, resembling ferocious animals when fighting violently.

The teachings of good, prudent, and wise men were quickly forgotten because, after their death, no one else remembered their guiding words and advice.

Science began with the efforts of a few people dedicated to intelligence; however, it quickly disappeared because it lacked continuity. It was impractical to continue the commendable research without the presence of its initiators.

At that time, the Lord, inspired by compassion for humanity, bestowed upon them an invaluable treasure that would enable them to advance in a genuine manner.

This treasure is the book. With it, schools appeared; with schools, education was consolidated on Earth, and with education, people began to consciously rid themselves of evil.

While some misguided authors produce harmful books that sow despair and cruelty, such works fade quickly. In contrast, books are a divine gift to humanity, enabling great teachers to guide us across generations and civilizations through their enduring words.

It is through books that we receive teaching and guidance, mental readjustment, and inner renewal.

We could hardly achieve happiness without good reading. Jesus himself, in order to remain with us, bequeathed us the Gospel of Love, which is undoubtedly the Divine Book in whose lessons we can find liberation from all evil.

37
THE UNEXPECTED SALVATION

On a rainy afternoon in a European country, a train driver guided by his faith prepared the locomotive for a long journey with many passengers. He looked at the dark sky and recited the Sunday prayer with deep conviction.

Late at night, the train's headlamp revealed what seemed to be two arms signaling urgently for help. He stopped the train and, with several passengers, ran along the tracks to assess potential danger.

After a short distance, they discovered a major flood had destroyed the bridge that the train was meant to cross.

By a stroke of providence, the train and its passengers had been spared disaster.

Overcome with joy, the engineer and passengers searched for the person who had given them the life-saving warning, but no one appeared. Intrigued, they continued their search until they found a large bat lying on the ground, clearly in agony. The enormous flying creature had flapped its wings in front of the headlight, like two waving arms, and fallen under the gears.

The engineer removed it with care and affection, showing it to the astonished passengers and telling them how he had prayed fervently, invoking God's protection, before departing. Right there, then, he knelt before the bat that had just died, exclaiming in a loud voice:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

Amen.

When he finished praying, a great stillness reigned over the landscape. All the passengers, believers and non-believers alike, were also kneeling, repeating the prayer with loving respect.

Some wept with emotion and gratitude, thanking the Heavenly Father, who had saved their lives through an animal that instills such fear in human beings. Even the rain had stopped falling, as if the silent sky were also joining in the sublime prayer.

38
PRAYER

Lord, teach us to offer You a pure heart and elevated thoughts in prayer.

Help us to ask, in Your Name, that the strength of our desires may not disturb the fulfillment of Your plans.

Support us, so that our feelings may be in harmony with Your will and that we may, each day, be living and active instruments of peace and love, of improvement and joy, in accordance with Your Law.

So be it.

The End